

Michigan State University Teacher Education Program

Intern Placement Policies

During the internship, prospective teachers work closely with their mentor teachers, MSU field instructors and MSU course instructors to put together in practice what they have learned and continue to learn about subject matter, curriculum, pedagogy, and learners. Intern placements are made carefully to insure that interns have ample opportunities not only for practical experience but also for thoughtful reflection upon the analysis of that experience.

Each year we place more than 450 interns, along with approximately 1000 teacher candidates in earlier stages of the program. As we place them, we must balance a range of considerations as described below. Teacher candidates should be familiar with placement policies in order to understand how decisions are made. Teacher candidates should especially note that:

- **We do not permit teacher candidates to seek their own placements.**
- **We ask teacher candidates to express some of their preferences regarding placements, and we do attempt to satisfy those preferences, but we CANNOT GUARANTEE to do so.**

What we consider in making placements:

When making placements, we strive to follow these principles:

1. We place teacher candidates in schools where we have developed or are developing school-university partnerships for teacher education. This means that whenever possible, teacher candidates are placed in groups within schools that are within a compact geographic area, rather than being distributed across many schools with only one or two teacher candidates in each. When teacher candidates are placed in groups in compact areas, MSU personnel can spend more of their time working with teacher candidates and developing strong partnerships with schools and teachers.
2. We place teacher candidates in situations that match the teaching certificates that they want to earn. Placing ALL candidates in situations that match their intended certificates takes priority over placing any candidate in a preferred grade or situation.
3. We give high priority to placements in schools in urban centers that serve students who live in poverty, who live amidst substantial social problems, and/or who have special needs. We place teacher candidates where they can learn to teach diverse students in diverse settings. Michigan teaching certificates authorize the persons who hold them to teach all Michigan children in given grades and subject matters. When teacher candidates accept admission to our program, they accept the obligation to prepare themselves to teach all those children, in all those places.
4. Prior to the internship, we place teacher candidates only in the Lansing area. Prior to the internship, most teacher candidates are carrying a full academic program only part of which is in teacher education. Therefore, we place teacher candidates, in TE 301, TE 401, and TE 402 only in schools within a 30-minute drive from MSU.
5. For the internship, MSU places teacher candidates in several areas across the state, and particularly in major population centers including the Lansing area, the Grand Rapids/Holland area, the Jackson area, and the greater SE Michigan area. We do that partly to achieve the commitments described above, and partly to help teacher candidates reduce the expense of the program by serving their internships closer to home. ***Special Education interns, with a few exceptions, will be placed in a Lansing area school.***

In making placements in distant sites, (e.g., Grand Rapids/Holland, Jackson, greater SE Michigan area), we follow these guidelines:

- **Indicating a preference for a distant site does not guarantee placement in that site.** When the number of requests for a distant site is greater than the number of placements available, a lottery system may be used to determine who will be placed in the distant site. Before resorting to a lottery, we will give preference to those teacher candidates who want placements in schools in urban centers or in schools that serve students who live in poverty, who live amidst substantial social problems, and/or who have special needs. Then, remaining teacher candidates who have requested a distant site area will be included in a lottery to determine who will get the remaining available placements.
- **If a particular placement is offered in a requested distant site area, and a teacher candidate declines it, that teacher candidate will not be guaranteed another placement in that requested distant site area.** That is, if the initial placement is declined, the candidates will go to the bottom of the list of candidates desiring that distant site, and if there are not sufficient placements to accommodate everyone who prefers that site, candidates who declined their initial placement will be placed instead in the Lansing area.

6. We avoid placing teacher candidates in situations where they are already known or may already have close associations with school personnel or students. The operating principle here is that evaluations of performance should not be subject to preexisting bias. For example:

- We do not place teacher candidates in school districts they attended as K-12 students, unless the district was a large urban district (e.g., Lansing, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Flint, Pontiac). In this event, we do not place teacher candidates in the schools they attended as K-12 students.
- We avoid placement in districts (or, in the case of large districts, in schools) where a close relative of the teacher candidate is employed.

7. Placements are subject to change at any time due to unanticipated circumstances beyond our control. Should this occur, we will make every attempt to find an alternative placement as soon as possible. During the summer, however, it is extremely difficult to contact school personnel. Therefore, placements that need to be changed over the summer may take longer to confirm.